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PAPERS OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS.

REPORTS ON EXCAVATIONS AT SPARTA IN 1893.

In the reports on the excavations of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in 1892 to the President of the Archæological Institute of America,[1] as well as to the Chairman of the Managing Committee of the School,[2] mention was made of the excavations at Sparta in the spring of that year. The chief definite result of these excavations was the apparent discovery of the "circular building" spoken of by Pausanias[3] as being close to the *Skias*.

Before the work of excavating was begun the site presented the appearance of a round mound of earth about forty-four metres in diameter at the base, lying on the gentle slope of a ridge with the summit of which the upper surface of the mound was continuous at the northwest. The sides of the mound rise steeply, and the summit, though nearly level, has a slight slope from northwest to southeast. The surface of the mound is highest above the slope of the ridge at its southern side (about six metres).

The excavations conducted last year revealed the existence of a large wall of Hellenic construction following the line of the circumference of the mound for some distance in an easterly direction from the point marked *Z* on Fig. 17. At the easternmost point of this line there were evident traces of repair in a subsequent period of the history of this building; while a few feet to the southeast of the wall, at this point, there were Roman remains of a brick structure in fair preservation. On the upper surface of the mound last year's work also brought to light a large basis for a statue, or group of statues, and in close proximity to this, the thumb of a marble colossal statue, probably holding a scepter. From the workmanship of this thumb the statue does not appear to have been of early date; it probably belonged to the Roman or the Hellenistic age.

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[1] *Thirteenth Annual Report*, p. 66, *seq.*

[2] *Eleventh Annual Report of the Managing Committee, Director's Report*, p. 31.

[3] 3. xii, 9. *πρὸς δὲ τῇ Σκιάδι οἰκοδόμημά ἐστι περιφερές, ἐν δὲ αὐτῷ Διὸς καὶ ’Αφροδίτης ἀγάλματα ἐπίκλησιν ’Ολυμπίων· τοῦτο ’Επιμενίδην κατασκευάσαι λέγουσιν, οὐχ ὁμολογοῦντες τὰ ἐς αὐτὸν ‘Αργείοις, ὅπου μηδὲ πολεμῆσαί φασι πρὸς Κνωσίους.*

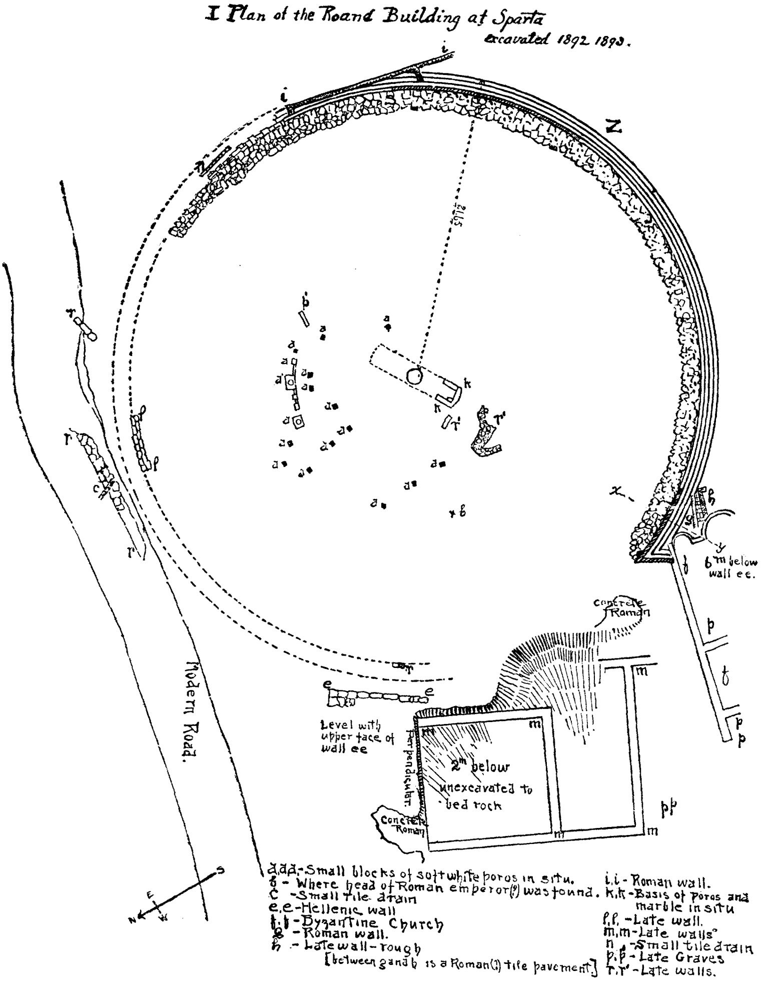


FIG. 17.

On April 15 Professor Waldstein and Mr. Meader began work, which was carried on without interruption until April 25. After the beginning was made the work was left in the hands of Mr. Meader, who was assisted during the last day in taking photographs and making measurements by Mr. Richard Norton. The account of the work here given is from Mr. Meader's notes:

Work was begun by sinking a curved trench westward from *Z*, where it was hoped the continuation of the wall would be found. The first day's excavation, however, resulted only in the discovery of a Byzantine church as indicated on Fig. 17, a number of late graves (marked *p p p*), which contained only the skeletons of the buried, and at *m m m* several late walls built with larger or smaller worked and unworked stones and brick set in mortar. Two men were also set at work on the east side of the mound to follow still further the wall there found. On the following day the western trench was widened toward the centre of the mound and the circular wall was again brought to light. On this and the following days the wall was followed to its termination near the Byzantine church, where it was found to be joined at an acute angle by a second piece of curved wall of similar construction, and as closely as can be determined from the small arc preserved, of the same radius. The eastern end of the wall was also found to extend several metres beyond the point to which it was uncovered last year.

The diameter of the circle upon which the wall was built was next measured and its centre determined. The radius of the circle of the outermost (lowest) part of the wall was found to be 21.65 m., and with this radius the line of the still unexcavated part of the circle was laid out. All of this arc of the circle (nearly 180°) lies high upon the top of the mound. A trench dug along this arc resulted in the discovery of no part of the original structure. At *l l* was found a late wall lying exactly upon the line which the old wall must have followed if it existed here, and slightly curved. The bricks and mortar employed in the construction of this wall show that it is not part of the original structure. The digging of trenches outside this line brought to light only late walls. At *g*, and *i i*, are two walls, apparently Roman, built in the characteristic Roman manner, with two faces of triangular bricks and a filling of concrete. At *r r* were found much later walls built of stones of irregular shapes and various sizes, bricks and pieces of marble all set in mortar. None of the marble was found to contain sculptural remains or inscriptions on the exposed faces. At *c* and *m* two small tile-drains were found (diameter about 10 cm.). The tiles are of coarse clay and are joined with mortar.

The depth of soil with which the circular wall was covered varied in different places. It was least at the south, where it scarcely exceeded a metre, and greatest at the east, where the lower part of the wall is about 3½ metres below the surface.

The work of clearing the surface of the mound had meanwhile been begun, and was finished on April 24. The highest point of the upper surface of the mound lies, as stated above, at the northwest, just back of the wall *e e*, where there is a small plateau about 7 m. square. Here the surface-soil is very thin and the bed-rock (a fairly hard, yellowish poros stone) is exposed in places. From this point the surface of the mound sinks slowly toward the southeast and the bed-rock dips a little more rapidly in the same direction, thus sinking gradually deeper below the surface. Toward the south the rock passes into a soft yellow sandstone. Every point of the surface of the rock was at one time or another exposed to view and examined. To save the expense of conveying the soil to a distance by carts, that from the newer diggings was continually thrown backward upon the part already excavated and mapped, and the whole surface was in this manner recovered.

The surface of the rock was found to be weathered into irregular cavities. Near the centre, however, an area had been artificially levelled and smoothed for the reception of the basis discovered last year, and probably for a pavement about it. Exactly at the centre of the arc of the large circular wall a round well-like cavity, one metre in diameter and about half a metre deep, with perpendicular sides, was cut in the rock. In the bottom of this was a second hole about .40 m. in diameter and .50 m. deep. Accurate measurements are not possible.

On the upper surface of the rock was found (besides the basis discovered last year) a number of blocks of soft poros stone *in situ*. The poros stone is of a finer quality than that of the bed-rock, being nearly white (slightly creamy in tint) and very soft. It can be cut with a dull knife and scratched with the finger nail. In most cases the bed-rock has been cut to fit these poros blocks. At *e e* was found, only a few inches below the surface, a wall, 7 m. long, of excellent Hellenic construction, consisting of rectangular blocks of hard limestone, varying slightly in length and breadth and carefully fitted without the use of clamps or mortar. A small depression in the rock at the eastern end is filled with a bit of polygonally fitted pavement, the upper surface of which is continuous with that part of the wall. The breadth of the wall varies from .40 m. to .60 m. At *r'*, *r'* were found two pieces of Byzantine or Turkish wall, and at *f'* a late grave.

The large circular wall is essentially a retaining-wall. Its main strength is afforded by a heavy wall of unworked stones piled upon one another and fitted together without the use of clamps or mortar. Its thickness varies from .80 m. to one metre. The mode of construction is indicated in the section, Fig. 18. This rough wall was originally masked with a facing of breccia, which has been entirely destroyed in its upper part. Enough remains of the lower courses to give a fair idea of what it originally was. It consisted of the usual Greek basement of three steps, upon which rested a vertical wall of about .40 m. in thickness and of unknown height. The wall is best preserved near the eastern end, where (through *x y*) the section (Fig. 18) is taken. There are here preserved three courses of the wall. The lowest is a range of *orthostatai*, or stones set on edge, .40 m. in thickness and 1.30 m. in height (about 4 Greek feet). Their length varies from 1.50 to 3 metres. Upon these lies a band of unpolished red marble .30 m. high and .70 m. broad, having cut upon its upper face a broad, shallow channel to form a bed for the next course of stones above. This consists again of *orthostatai*, here .97 m. (3 Greek feet) high and .43 m. thick. Only one of these blocks is still preserved *in situ*. The steps of the basement vary in height and width, as shown in the section. The broadest and highest is that at the bottom and the narrowest and lowest is the uppermost one. The top step has on its upper face a jointing surface, slightly hollowed, for the reception of the *orthostatai*, as is shown in the section. The entire wall is supported upon a foundation built of rough stones piled upon one another (see section). This foundation is at least a metre in vertical thickness at *z*, where a trench was dug to examine it. The character of the upper courses of the breccia wall is unknown as none of them are preserved. The original height of the wall can scarcely have been two metres greater than that now preserved, as the upper face of stone *f* (Fig. 18) is less than two metres below the level of the basis *k k*, above which the original upper surface of the mound cannot have extended.

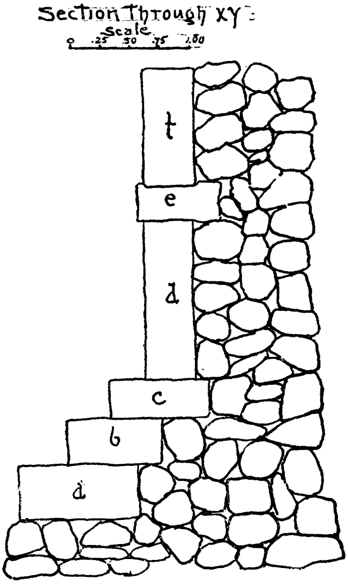


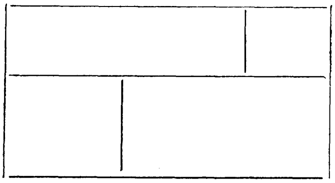
FIG. 18.

The rough inner retaining-wall is preserved for a length of about 68 m. measuring along the circuit from the western corner. The height of the preserved part varies from .50 m. to 2 m. above the top step of the basement. The uppermost step of the basement is preserved for a length of 56.65 m., and the lower steps for about the same distance with the exception of a few metres near *z*, where several blocks have fallen out of position. Of the lower course of *orthostatai* ten blocks are preserved *in situ*, two near the western corner (aggregating 5.90 m. in length) and eight east of the point *z*.

These are indicated on Fig. 17 by the ruled surfaces. Only two stones of the next (the narrow) course above are preserved, and only one block of the second range of *orthostatai*. These last stones are all at the western corner.

From the point *s* the *orthostatai* have been removed from position and a very roughly built wall of breccia blocks of various sizes built in their place. These blocks are laid upon one another carelessly without fitting or fastening of any kind, and no attempt has been made to give the wall a smooth outer face; it is such a wall as might be hurriedly constructed for purposes of defense. No mortar or clamps are used, and a large block of marble, an architectural fragment, has been built in with the breccia.

As stated above, the circular wall is joined at its western extremity by a second wall of similar construction and likewise curved. It also has the rough stone supporting wall and the facing of breccia resting upon a basement of three steps. The two walls are joined at their meeting point with much skill and are apparently contemporary. The only difference in their method of construction is that, answering to the *orthostatai* in the former wall, we have in the latter four quadrilateral blocks carefully joined, thus:



The combined height of the two courses is exactly that of the *orthostatai* to which they correspond.

Unfortunately this wall is preserved for a length of only 2.25 m., when it is interrupted by the Byzantine church. As the level of the church is below that of the wall, all traces of the latter have been destroyed and it is now impossible to state how far it extended. Possibly it formed a semicircle, or even a larger arc, and like the longer wall supported the earth of a second mound since entirely destroyed. The ground lies so low west of the Byzantine church that it is hard to believe that any further remains of the wall could be discovered by excavating there. This entire area has been built and rebuilt in later Roman and Byzantine times, so that its original form is entirely lost.

The excavations have thus established the fact that we have here to deal not with a building in the proper sense of the word, but with a large circular stereobate or perhaps two such adjacent to each other, assuming the possibility that the second short wall is the remains of a second stereobate. This being the case, it becomes necessary to enquire as to the possible object of such a foundation; *i. e.*, as to the form of the structure that rested upon it.

Owing to the elevation and the exposed position of the surface of the supporting terrace the greater part of the structure or structures upon it has been destroyed. The scanty remains that now exist are indicated upon the plans. The large Fig. 17 shows their position upon the terrace; Fig. 19 shows more exactly the relative positions of the stones to one another; Fig. 20 shows on a larger scale the exact size and relative positions of the most important of these remains; and Fig. 20–IV. shows a cross-section of the stone numbered 4 on Figures 17 and 19. The walls *h*, *r*, and *r'* are late and do not concern us. We have therefore to take account only of those blocks which are marked *a*, *a* and *k* upon Fig. 17.

As already stated, all the blocks marked *a* and *a'* are of very soft white poros. They number twenty-two and are all *in situ*. Each approximates toward the rectangular form, but usually varies a little from it. The vertical faces of most of them are left rough, but the top faces without exception are carefully smoothed and horizontal. In most cases the native rock has been cut away to fit the blocks and form a solid bed for them. The extant blocks are all arranged nearly in concentric circles about the point *c'*, which lies very close to the centre *c* of the arc of the retaining wall. The surface of the rock, as we have already seen, is levelled for a space about the centre for the reception of the basis *l*. From this level, however, it gradually rises toward the north and east, so that the upper faces of the poros blocks in each circle are higher than those of the blocks in the next circle within. The absence of necessary instruments rendered the exact measurement of the relative height of the blocks impossible. The slope of the rock is, however, very slight, and block No. 7 (Fig. 19) lies scarcely more than half a metre above the central area, although it is the highest of all the blocks and the furthest removed from the centre (10.85 m.). The arrangement is thus that of the cavea of a theatre, with a very slight slope. All the blocks except one lie north of a line drawn due east and west through the centre *c*. This, however, does not prove that none formerly

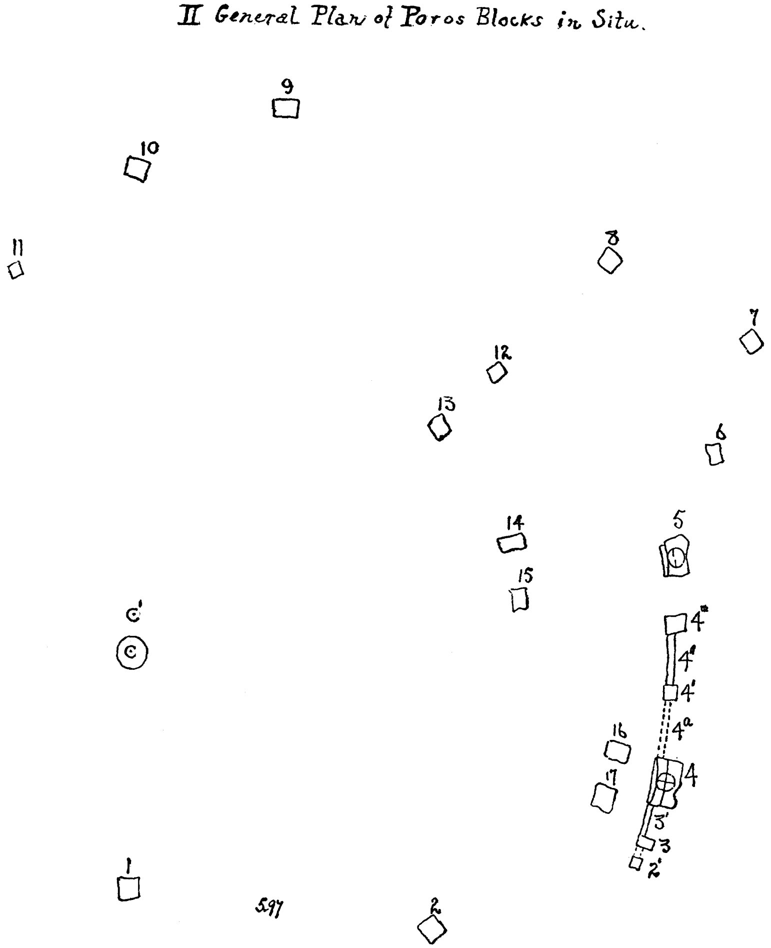


FIG. 19.

existed south of this line. They may indeed have formed a complete circuit about the centre. The rock south of the line mentioned lies low and sinks steadily toward the south. The blocks, if they existed, must therefore have lain embedded in the soil above the native rock and have long since been torn out of their exposed position and destroyed. There seems to be no evidence either to prove or to disprove the existence of a system of blocks in the southern half of this circle similar to that in the northern half.

The larger number of these blocks have no architectural form, and their smoothed upper faces suggest that they served as supports for the slabs of a pavement. Eight of the blocks, however, because of the peculiarities of their forms and position, demand especial attention. All have their faces in the same horizontal plane. They are so placed that the inner edges of 2′, 3′, 4^a, 4′, 4″ and 4‴ (Fig. 19) lie exactly on the line of a circle struck about *c*′, while blocks 3, 4, and 5 have along their upper inner edge a rabbet (.05 m. deep and .05 m. wide), the vertical face of which also lies along this same circle as shown by the dotted lines which are struck across the three stones on Fig. 20. This rabbet is shown in the section Fig. 20–IV. The southern vertical faces of stones 4 and 5 are straight (see Fig. 20), but the vertical faces of the two rabbets are cut on the circle. The horizontal faces of the rabbets are thus about a centimetre wider at the middle (*i. e.*, at *c* and *h*) than at the ends. On the upper face of each of these stones there is a circular surface raised a little more than a centimetre above the rest of the surface of the stone, and .42 m. in diameter. Although the edges of the circles have been broken in parts, yet accurate measurement of their diameters is possible. The two circles (one on each stone) agree in size. On the upper surfaces of each of these two circles are incised two grooves having a triangular cross-section ; see section, Fig. 20–IV. These grooves are small ; about .004 m. broad at the top and .003 m. deep. They can also be traced in places on the other parts of the top faces of the two stones. They are indicated on Fig. 20 by the lines *a b*, *c d*, *e f*, *g h* ; *a b* and *e f* are cut upon a line of a circle concentric with that upon which the inner edges of the stones and the vertical faces of the rabbets lie, while *c d* and *g h* are cut along radii of the same circle. The radial lines cross the circular ones exactly at the centre of the raised circular faces. These lines doubtless served constructional purposes, probably to mark the central point upon which a column was to be placed. The surface of the stones about the circles is not smoothed, but has the appearance of having been rudely broken and cracked away. Such a destruction is one that would naturally result while the columns were still *in situ* if the soft poros stone were subjected to violent usage; the portion about the columns would be broken away while the surface upon which the columns stood would be preserved. It is a curious coincidence that within two yards of these blocks were found two small Doric columns of white marble (.39 m. in diameter at

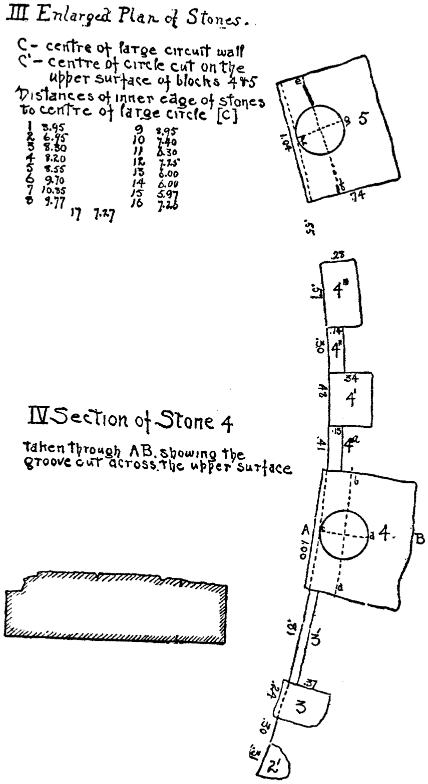

III Enlarged Plan of Stones.
C – centre of large circuit wall
C' – centre of circle cut on the upper surface of blocks 4 & 5
Distances of inner edge of stones to centre of large circle [C]
1 3.95
2 6.95
3 8.30
4 8.20
5 8.55
6 9.70
7 10.35
8 9.77
9 8.95
10 7.40
11 8.30
12 7.25
13 6.00
14 6.00
15 5.97
16 7.26
17 7.27
IV Section of Stone 4
taken through AB, showing the groove cut across the upper surface
5
4
4
4
4
4
3
2
A
B
e
f
g
h
a
d
b

FIG. 20.

the base and about 1.40 m. high). The diameter of the columns is very close to that of the circular surfaces on the blocks, and it is probable that the columns originally stood upon them. A small fragment of a third column, agreeing in material, size, and style with these two, was also found in the trench east of the building. There was found, too, a small piece of a Doric capital measuring .13 m. from the annulets to the bottom of the abacus. The size corresponds well with that of the columns. The fragment of a triglyph of which one band measures .135 m., thus giving .405 as the full width, is too large to belong with the columns. The existence of the Doric columns, however, makes almost necessary the assumption also of the usual Doric entablature with triglyph-frieze. If such an entablature existed here, it was of course curved. No fragments of a curved architrave have been found. Built into the late wall reconstructed along the line of the semicircular wall north of *s*, there is a curved marble block which may be from an architrave. It has still the boss upon its surface. The radius of the curve upon which its faces are cut is, however, much smaller than that of the curve along which the columns stood, and it cannot have belonged to them.

The rabbets cut along the edges of the stones 3, 4, and 5 appear to have served as supports for pavement-slabs. Indeed, on the western and eastern vertical faces of stone 4 there are joint-surfaces, which prove the existence of at least another block on each side.

It thus appears probable that the large circular terrace supported a circular colonnade paved with marble or poros (probably the former; as soft poros here employed would scarcely have stood the wear to which a pavement is subjected) having in its centre a flat area containing a basis supporting a statue or a group. The form of the part of the basis still preserved is seen by a glance at Fig. 17. It is complete at the eastern end. If we conceive of it as originally having extended as far east of the circle as the western end lies west of the circle, we have a basis of the shape indicated by the dotted lines on Fig. 17.

There still remains the wall *e e*, which is beyond doubt of Hellenic workmanship and of a good period. It consists of a single course. The length of the preserved part is seven metres. It is complete at the western end. The eastern face of the last stone toward the east bears a joint-surface, which proves that the wall extended still further in this direction; how far is uncertain. The top face bears a joint-surface .15 m. broad and .005 m. above the rest of the face of the stone. This joint-surface turns at the eastern end, not exactly at a right angle.

The wall is entirely isolated from all vestiges of other walls, and there exists no clue to the form of the structure to which it belonged. Its position, however, at the highest point of the terrace along the eastern side of the small plateau mentioned above, at the natural point of approach to the terrace, suggests that there existed here a sort of propylæa, by which access was given to the terrace and colonnade.

The small objects brought to light by the excavations are of little importance. No work of art was found which can be assigned to a period as early as the third century B. C. The finds were all or almost all Roman or Byzantine.

Of sculpture there were found the following pieces:

(*a*) The head of a Roman emperor (?); white marble. The head, of natural size, is bearded and hence later than Trajan. It is, moreover, cut in very thin relief. The work is very poor. The features are cruel, and the face bears some resemblance to the portraits of Caracalla. The circles of the iris of the eyes are deeply incised, and the pupils are indicated by a hollow. Found on top of terrace, thirteen metres directly in front of the west end of wall *e e*, at the point marked *b* on Fig. 17.

(*b*) Fragment of a relief—lower right-hand corner. Found in trench east of large wall at a depth of two metres. Size .26 x .30 m.; white marble; represents a standing man holding his robe across his breast with his right hand. The piece is much mutilated; head and face are broken away. Work poor.

(*c*) Fragments of a relief; white marble; .08 x .12 m., representing a draped woman from the breasts to the knees. Very poor work.

(*d*) Fragment of drapery .25 m. long. The folds are large enough to have belonged to a statue of natural size. Found on surface of terrace near the centre.

(*e*) A wrist, natural size, .95 m. long and .18 m. in circumference; white marble with blue veins. Upon the wrist a few folds of drapery which were clasped by the fingers; about it a raised convex ridge—perhaps a bracelet or the remains of a finger which clasped it.

(*f*) South of the building, in trench, a fragment of drapery in white marble, .175 m. x .17 m.

(*h*) In the trench at the west a white marble slab (size .28 x .35 x .08 m.) bearing in mezzo-rilievo, in the centre, an urn with two handles, ornamented; at the right a fragment of a tendril, conventionalized, at the left a lion's head facing. This resembles the small metopes from the altar-entablature built into the little Metropolitan church at Athens. After finding this I noticed a second like it in the museum and a third built into an arch in the main street of Sparta.

(*i* and *j*) Capital and base of a Byzantine pilaster; white marble. Both found near the Byzantine church. The latter bears two lion's paws and between them an acanthus leaf.

(*k* to *n*) White marble Corinthian capital. Found in Byzantine church. Base of Ionic column, found on top of terrace (white marble). Fragment of white marble Ionic capital showing part of echinus with egg and dart pattern, the inner edge of the volute, and the honeysuckle-blossom between them. Fragment of a small Doric capital, white marble (see above).

(*o*) Coarse clay jar without slip or ornament; height .21 m.; found in east trench.

(*p*) Coarse clay pot, without slip or ornament. Found in the triangle between the Byzantine church and the circular building.

(*q*) A number of Roman and Byzantine coins, many obscure, but none so early as the age of the Antonines. Two small wheels .015 m. in diameter, one of bone and one of blue stone, both pierced by a small hole in the center. Several bone styli. A *κομβή*.

There is no doubt that we here have to deal with a circular building in the construction of which a hillock or large mound has been used. The relation of the building to this hillock seemed to me so peculiar that I believed it might be some ancient tumulus or grave, or might at least bear some reference to a prehistoric or heroic place of interment. The Laconian custom (especially the instance of the neighboring Amyclæ with its temple of Apollo built upon the grave of Hyacinthus) and the numerous heroic graves in Sparta itself lent strong support to such a supposition. It is not impossible that this may still turn out to be the case.

The lower structure of this circular building with the orthostatæ acted as a supporting wall, while the building consisted of at least three concentric circles. It appears probable that the round hole cut in the block occupying the centre of the circumference was meant to hold the mastlike post which supported an umbrella-shaped roof.

Our monument must thus be classed among the round buildings which are of so much interest in the history of Greek architecture. The Prytaneum, the Tholos, the temple of Hestia, perhaps even the Skias[4] were all in origin intimately related to one another. The Prytaneum, or "City hall," of ancient Athens stood on the high ground at the foot of the northern declivity of the Acropolis. In the time of Pausanias the Prytanes sacrificed and dined in the Tholos, a circular building in a different part of the city, which building thus took over some of the functions of the older Prytaneum.[5] As Mr. Frazer well puts it (p. 152), "The Prytaneum, a round building with a pointed, umbrella-shaped roof, was originally the house of the king, chief, or headman (prytanis) of an independent village or town, and it contained a fire which was kept constantly burning. It is only necessary to add that, when a colony was sent out, the fire for the chief's house (Prytaneum) in the new village was taken from that of the chief's house in the old village."

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[4] *Etym. Magnum, s. v.* Σκιάς. Were it not for the definite *πρὸς δὲ τῇ Σκιάδι οἰκοδόμημά ἐστι περιφερές* . . . in the passage in Pausanias referring to the Spartan building one might doubt whether the Spartan Skias was not identical with this circular building.

[5] CURTIUS, *Attische Studien*. ii. p. 63, *seq*. For Θόλος *cf*. Hesychius, Harpocration, Suidas, Timæus, *Lex. Plat., s. v.* θόλος. See also I. G. FRAZER on the *Prytaneum, the Temple of Vesta*, etc., in *Journal of Philology*, London, 1885, vol. xiv. p. 145, *seq*., an article which throws considerable light on the history of these early buildings.

The fire (*focus*, *foculus*, the hearth, *ἑστία, ἐσχάρα, ἐσχαρίς* Vesta) thus becomes the centre of importance in these buildings and the worship and rites connected with them, as it was the centre of importance in the house and household. In the Homeric house it stood in the corner of the *αὐλή*.[6] The same relation obtains in all early civilizations and has led to the round building,[7] be it a *barrow*, or a *dolmen*, or a Sardinian *nuraga*, or an East Indian *tope*, or the hut of the American Indian. There can be but little doubt that the later Roman temple of Vesta was once part of the king's house, and thus points to the earliest form of house. The tradition of this early form of the temple of Vesta, with walls of wattled osiers and thatched roof, is directly referred to by Ovid.[8]

As regards the whole history of these round buildings, to use Mr. Frazer's words, "we descry in the past the chiefs of the old Græco-Italian clans dwelling in round huts of wattled osiers with peaked roofs of thatch."

The Spartan building thus brings us in relation with the remotest prehistoric times of Hellas and with the earliest stages of civilization in all parts of the world. This building has evidently undergone many changes during the Roman and Christian periods of its history. The statues of Zeus and Aphrodite, mentioned by Pausanias as standing in the building in his time, were of subsequent date. The finger of the colossal statue found last year, in the immediate vicinity of the statue-pedestal on the central height of the building, manifestly belongs to a period not earlier than the close of the fourth century B. C., and may be Roman. There are other fragments and heads of distinctly Roman workmanship found on the site; while some traces of repairs in the early building itself, as well as most of the additions to it, are of the Roman times. So, too, the inscriptions are of the Roman period. On the other hand the *boustrophedon* inscription found on the same site evidently belongs to the archaic Greek period. It appears beyond a doubt that the circular wall with the orthostatæ is of early Hellenic structure. The poros blocks *in situ* probably also belong to this early Hellenic building. The identification of this edifice with the circular building mentioned by Pausanias[9] is most natural. The masonry of the large stones, without clamps or mortar, points to an age preceding the early historical buildings of the fifth century B. C.

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[6] *Od.* xxii. 466 (Schol. *ibid.*) makes it the storehouse. It may thus have resembled the *θησαυρός*, and hence the bee-hive tomb.

[7] FERGUSSON, *Rude Stone Monuments in all Countries*, London, 1872.

[8] *Fasti* vi. 261 *seq.*

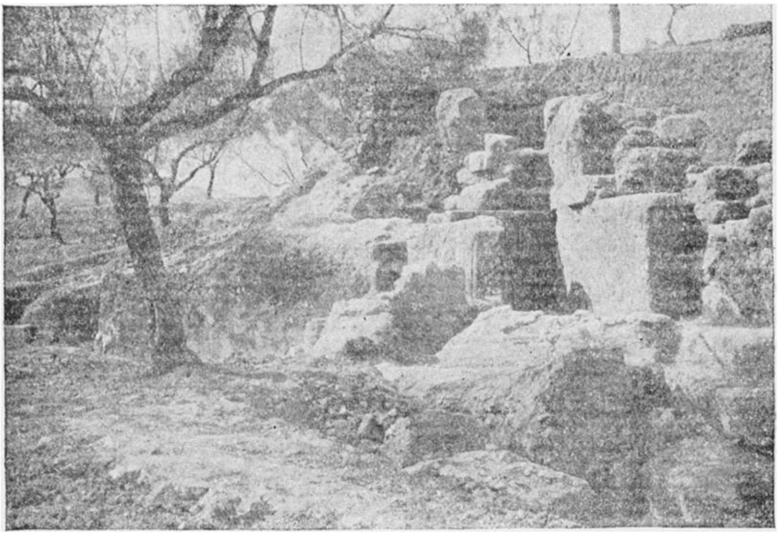

FIG. 21.

Epimenides, to whom this building is assigned by Pausanias, furnishes us with a date which corresponds well with the archæological evidence. We cannot go far wrong in fixing upon the year 600 B. C. as an approximate central date. It may have been erected several years earlier in the life of Epimenides, but as he appears, according to one tradition, to have died at Sparta, perhaps the beginning of the sixth century may be a more likely date. In the traditions concerning Epimenides[10] there are no doubt uncritical and mythical admixtures, but he appears to have been one of the early hieratic poets from Crete,[11] who exercised considerable influence in his age in the various centres of Greek life. He was a sage and spiritual purifier. It is no doubt owing to this great influence that the more fabulous elements have been in later times attracted to his name. The fixed and important date in his life is furnished by the call he received from Athens to purify from the Cylonian sacrilege, in which the Athenians followed the dictates of a Delphic oracle. This most probably took place in the first year of the 46th Olympiad, *i. e.*, 596 B. C., a few years before the Archonship of Solon (594 B. C.).

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[9] *Loc. cit.*

[10] The chief sources are DIOG. LAERT. i § 109-115; PLUT., *Solon.* 22; STRABO, x. p. 479 C; PAUS. 1, 14, 3.

If we are right in the identification of this building, it will readily be seen of what signal importance for the history of Greek architecture this monument is. As a *tholos*, or circular building, it points back to the very earliest form of primitive architecture; while on the other hand it would be perhaps the earliest known building of the historical period of Greek history.

It furthermore is of the greatest value for the topography of ancient Sparta. The treatises on the topography of Sparta[12] have hitherto necessarily been of a purely hypothetical nature. It is much to the credit of Professor Nestorides that he should have assigned just this place to the "circular building" mentioned by Pausanias, independently of our excavations. With the theatre and this building we now have two fixed points of departure. The Skias must be close by; while it appears to us that we might look for the Agora to the south of the mound running toward the theatre; but much closer to the hills than has hitherto been supposed. Still, even at this moment, with the new point gained, it appears to us that reconstructions of the ancient topography of Sparta are premature. We must wait for further evidence from the spade and pick.

[11] He was a native of Phæstos near Gortyna or of Knossos in Crete.

[12] Besides A. Blouet, *Expédition Scientif. de la Morée*, Paris, 1833 (where an amphitheatre, not to be confused with this circular building, is given in III. Pl. 46 on the southeastern slope of "Citadelle"), and E. Curtius, *Der Peloponnesos*, we might mention K. Stein, *Die Topographie des Alten Sparta*, and R. Nestorides, *Τοπογραφία τῆς Ἀρχαίας Σπάρτης*, Athens, 1892, which has appeared since our first excavation, though it was written before we began our work.

The system upon which such excavations ought to be carried out in the future seems to us to be clearly defined. Immediately below this mound, running along the foot of the hills in either direction (east and west) are considerable ruins of late city walls, into which many stones of ancient masonry are built. Now a careful examination of these walls has shown that their bases consist frequently of series of ancient worked stones grouped together; those of one kind are massed together for a certain distance, and are followed by series of other stones of different material and workmanship. The cause for both this uniformity of material for a certain distance, and the diversity in the various sections of the wall, seems to be the fact that the stones in the several instances were taken from ancient buildings close at hand. These ancient buildings are to be sought for in close proximity to the wall. Some of these worked stones bear inscriptions.

The first task of the future excavator will thus be to clear the lower portions of these walls from weeds and shrubs and to dig to the bottom of the walls. It may be found that some of the foundation-stones of ancient structures, are actually *in situ*, and trenches at right angles to them may lead to the other walls of the buildings.

It is not improbable that the Agora and many other structures may thus be discovered, and the greater the number of such identifications the more easy will it be to fix the topography and to find the remaining buildings mentioned by Pausanias.

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